

HOUSING COORDINATOR

The challenge of being in the “forest” is that we often miss the “trees”. It’s easy to focus on the work that still remains and forget that we’ve made some pretty good strides. Last year I presented a 10-year overview of the progress in Housing. It’s always good though, to look back and remember the original goals of the housing program. In 1999, Applied Economic Research out of Laconia, NH provided a report entitled “*Enhancing and Preserving Berlin’s Residential Tax Base: A Housing Revitalization Strategy*”. In their summary they highlighted 6 major recommendations:

1. *Encourage new middle and upper-income housing.*
2. *Avoid building new subsidy units*
3. *Seek out rehabilitation subsidies*
4. *Reduce density in existing neighborhoods*
5. *Implement Neighborhood Improvement effort*
6. *Enforce Housing Code*



1051 Main Street (before)



1051 Main Street (after)



155 Willow Street during demo



155 Willow Street (after)

The Study identified that more than 58% of the City’s Housing Units were structures rated as in fair or poor condition. They recommended that 500 units be removed and land sold and merged to abutting property owners to reduce densification of neighborhoods.

Demolitions. The City has been unwavering in its commitment to address blight and substandard housing throughout neighborhoods. Budgeted municipal funds, Neighborhood Stabilization dollars, and an EDI-Special Projects grant, have enabled us to move forward aggressively with the abatement and demolition of blighted housing. From 2007 to the present, **\$3,108,240.00** from these combined sources have contributed to the removal of **68 blighted buildings** (representing **210 Units**). Additionally, the reconstruction of Route 110, involved the demolition of an additional **31 buildings / 56 units, for a total of 99 buildings/ 266 units at the end of FY 2105 in Berlin!**

Reinvestment

Re-establishing our neighborhoods and community as a place that is desirable to live and work, must also incorporate re-investment and development. Land from buildings that have been demolished, continue to be purchased and merged by abutters, and other properties sold for re-development; many by local neighbors and contractors, as well as qualified regional investors. Required improvements and oversight on properties sold by the City have resulted in the addition of high quality units to the existing housing stock. A stabilizing trend in the rental market is evidenced through rising rental rates throughout the city. In this period, twelve (12) land parcels and eight (8) single & multi-family homes were sold, improved and put back on the tax rolls.

Historic and Commercial Properties:

Berlin continues to assess innovative solutions to address some of our larger historic and commercial properties. Working with BIDPA, the City Manager and Community Development Director, we continue to pursue economic & recreation opportunities and re-investment in sites such as the old City Court House, former Bass Shoe industrial site, Brown Research Buildings and Dummer Yard.

In addition to the completion of the former Notre Dame High School into 33 adult living units, we are pleased to see the near-completion of another site originally on this list: the former Bartlett School. The efforts of a private investment company will contribute 13 additional high quality, 1 and 2-bedroom housing units to the rental market.

Berlin Neighborhood Revitalization Project

The City has been extremely fortunate to receive its' third Community Development Block Grant to support the Revitalization of individual homes. These much needed repairs, especially as they relate to improving energy efficiency and safety, have enabled many of our citizens to remain in their homes. To date these funds have contributed to the revitalization of 86 homes with a projection of an additional 12 before the

end of the grant in June: a projected total of **98 homes!**

LAND

Map/Lot	Address	Acres	Assessment	Min. Bid	Bid Amount
130-261	432 Burgess St.	0.11	\$6,700.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,250.00
130-278	349 Burgess St.	0.27	\$8,600.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
130-135	246 Burgess St.	0.13	\$6,400.00	\$1,000.00	\$3,005.00
131-069	325 Burgess St.	0.19	\$11,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$10,000.00
131-064	288 Burgess St.	0.11	\$6,400.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
125-064	Dustin St.	0.13	\$7,400.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
125-065	Dustin St.	0.13	\$7,400.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
117-093	613 Western Ave	0.34	\$9,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
130-276	376 Burgess St.	0.09	\$6,300.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,105.49
119-326	645 First Ave.	0.10	\$9,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
120-279	320 High St.	0.31	\$14,200.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,100.00
105-017	155 Jericho Rd	2.67	\$15,900.00	*\$6,590.00	\$2,000.00

\$39,960.49

PROPERTIES

110-003	110 York St.	0.09	\$24,000.00	\$4,800.00	\$5,000.00
110-041	616 Third Ave	0.23	\$89,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$16,150.00
120-024	212 Willow St.	0.22	\$101,000.00	\$15,150.00	\$15,555.10
120-339	306 Church St.	0.14	\$79,800.00	\$9,975.00	\$12,383.00
120-355	127 Prospect St.	0.27	\$65,100.00	\$8,138.00	\$8,554.00
130-398	511 Goebel St.	0.11	\$87,900.00	\$10,988.00	\$21,000.00
129-006	323 School St.	0.23	\$30,900.00	\$7,725.00	\$10,011.00
119-189	158 Willard St.	0.11	\$76,300.00	\$11,445.00	\$18,018.00

\$106,677.10

FY 14' & FY15' REVENUE FROM PROPERTY & LAND SALES: \$146,631.59

We often look for those dramatic indicators to measure improvement in a City or town: a large business or commercial venture, a major building project etc. But sometimes the smallest things are the most important indicators of hope: properties being painted, rental prices going up, neighbors paying attention to crime in their neighborhood, flowers planted in yards, people picking up trash, and a community that continues to be invested in its' roots and heritage.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the great work that happens every day here in Berlin!

Respectfully submitted,

Linda White

Housing Coordinator